

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUSSEL 00104 181030Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /080 W
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R 181005Z JAN 78
FM AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3394
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USAREUR HEIDELBERG
USAFE REMSTEIN
USCINCEUR STUTTGART

UNCLAS DUSSELDORF 0104

FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EFIN, BBAK, GW
SUBJECT: NRW MINISTER OF FINANCE RESIGNS OVER POUILLAIN AFFAIR

REF: A. DUESSELDORF 0101; B. DUESSELDORF 0088

1. IN LATE EVENING JAN 17, 1978, PROFESSOR
FRIEDRICH HALSTENBERG (SPD), AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE
POUILLAIN AFFAIR (SEE REFTELS), RESIGNED AS NORTHRHINE-
WESTPHALIAN (NRW) MINISTER OF FINANCE, DESPITE HAVING
RECEIVED A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FROM THE
NRW/SPD FACTION IN THE MORNING OF THE SAME DAY.

2. HOWEVER, THE FDP FACTION, THE SPD'S COALITION
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PAGE 02 DUSSEL 00104 181030Z

PARTNER, HAD INSISTED ON HALSTENBERG'S RESIGNATION,
WHICH, AFTER HOURS OF NEGOTIATIONS WAS ACCEPTED BY
MINISTER PRESIDENT HEINZ KUEHN. (KUEHN'S OWN POSITION
IS ALSOSHAKY AND HE CAN EXPECT TROUBLE FROM HIS OWN
SPD FACTION FOR OVERRIDING ITS UNANIMOUS VOTE. IN THE
PASTTHERE HAVE BEEN COMPLAINTS THAT THE JUNIOR PARTNER
IN THE COALITION, I.E. THE FDP, GOT ITS WAY TOO OFTEN.)

3. THE FDP HAS REITERATED ITS INTENTION TO CONTINUE THE COALITION WITH THE SPD. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS CONCERN IN THE BONN COALITION, AS SPD CHAIRMAN WILLY BRANDT AND FDP CHAIRMAN FOREIGN MINISTER HANS-DIETRICH GENSCHER ARE IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH DUESSELDORF AND CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT IS BEING CONTINUOUSLY INFORMED.

4. A SUCCESSOR TO HALTENBERG HAS NOT YET BEEN NOMINATED. JUSTICE MINISTER DR. DIETHER POSSER WILL TEMPORARILY ASSUME HALTENBERG'S DUTIES.

5. COMMENT: POSSER HAS EMERGED FROM THE POUILLAIN AFFAIR WITH HIS REPUTATION ENHANCED BECAUSE OF HIS CORRECTNESS IN HANDLING THE MATTER. THIS COULD GIVE HIM AN EDGE OVER COMPETITORS AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO KUEHN.BLIGH

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